



Plantation woman gets off the fast track to pursue her love of making decorated cookies. She shares her hints for novice bakers.



## sweet on COOKIES



### IF YOU GO

Sharmila Melwani's ghost cookies or Puffs will be served at the Embler Art Gallery, 1015 E. Las Olas Blvd., Fort Lauderdale, 6:30 to 10:30 p.m. May 5 to launch *Pluft, The Little Ghost*, performed by The Playground Theatre for Young Audiences, a new nonprofit repertory company. The evening will also include the play's costume sketches by famed Russian designer Emil Kapelush and the cast modeling the costumes. RSVP to 954-761-7722. For more information on the theater, visit [www.theplaygroundtheatre.com](http://www.theplaygroundtheatre.com). — DEBORAH S. HARTZ

**SHAPING HER NEW CAREER:** Sharmila Melwani of Plantation will be serving her stunning cookies at a local art gallery. Staff photos/Andrew Innerarity

BY DEBORAH S. HARTZ  
FOOD EDITOR

Sharmila Melwani of Plantation creates cookies considered works of art. Her ghost shapes will be served at the Embler Art Gallery on Las Olas in Fort Lauderdale on May 5. The evening is a celebration of the inaugural performance of *Pluft the Little Ghost*, a Brazilian fairy tale, by the Playground Theatre for Young Audiences.

### STEP-BY-STEP COOKIE DECORATING. PAGE 14

"In the play, whenever the mother ghost gets nervous, she runs off and makes cookies called Puffs, full of the west wind," explains the company's producing artistic director Stephanie Ansin.

The Puffs are shaped like little ghosts. But Melwani is known for much more than ghosts. She makes cookies shaped like tiaras and decorated with intricate swirls. Slivers of moons with smiles. Hearts with fondant faces. Ducks with tiny orange beaks. Even an "om" mantra in a lovely sparkly copper tone. These are Melwani's creatively decorated cookies, perfect for holidays and special occasions such as, this time of year, baby and wedding showers.

For showers, she decorates miniature heart-shaped sugar cookies with fondant flavored with vanilla or almond oil and then

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